

Original Article

The Impact of Personality Development Training on Teachers: A Phenomenological Study

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Received: 18 August 2025; Revised: 02 October 2025;
Accepted: 04 November 2025; Published: 01 December 2025

Abstract

This study explores how teachers experience and internalize personality development training, viewing it not as surface-level self-improvement but as a process of personal transformation, professional renewal, and emotional recalibration. Using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve public school teachers from selected secondary schools in Davao City between June and November 2024, supported by reflective journals and member checking. Analysis revealed personality development as a holistic process shaped by heightened self-awareness, improved emotional regulation, renewed professional confidence, strengthened interpersonal relationships, and sustained motivation for continuous growth, all negotiated amid institutional pressures, workload demands, and limited support. Findings suggest that transformation is sustained not merely by external training content but through internal meaning-making, reflective practice, and a rekindled sense of purpose. The study offers a humanistic account of teacher growth and recommends institutionalized personality development programs, mentoring systems, and reflective spaces that nurture both personal and professional dimensions of teaching.

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Keywords: emotional regulation, personality development, phenomenology, professional growth, teacher transformation, well-being

1. Introduction

Personality development has become an essential component of teacher professional growth, emphasizing the holistic formation of educators beyond pedagogical competence. It encompasses self-awareness, communication skills, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal relationships—all of which influence classroom management, student engagement, and overall teaching effectiveness (Bekturov & Kozhogeldieva, 2025). In many educational systems, professional development programs now include personality enhancement initiatives aimed at equipping teachers with the soft skills and positive dispositions necessary for effective teaching and leadership (Ramesh, 2024). Such programs recognize that the personality of the teacher, often described as the “hidden curriculum,” profoundly shapes the learning environment and the psychosocial climate of the classroom (Abdurrahman et al., 2025).

In the Philippine educational context, personality development training has gained increasing relevance, particularly in public schools where teachers face multifaceted challenges including heavy workloads, behavioral issues among students, and high expectations from administrators and parents (David & Naparan, 2024). The Department of Education and other professional organizations have initiated workshops and training programs designed to foster confidence, resilience, empathy, and effective communication among teachers. However, the actual impact of these initiatives on teachers’ personal and professional lives remains underexplored, as most studies focus on technical training or subject-specific competencies rather than the affective and interpersonal dimensions of teaching (Pagodpod, 2024).

Existing research highlights that personality development interventions can enhance teachers’ self-efficacy, motivation, and job satisfaction (Wahyuingsih et al., 2020). Yet, little is known about how teachers themselves make sense of these experiences, how such programs shape their perspectives, and what personal transformations occur as a result of participation. The lived experiences of teachers who undergo personality development training provide valuable insights into how these initiatives influence their attitudes, teaching behaviors, and professional relationships. Understanding these experiences is particularly important given the increasing emphasis on teacher well-being and holistic development as foundations of educational quality and sustainability (Eloff & Dittrich, 2021).

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the lived experiences of teachers who have participated in personality development training. Anchored in a phenomenological approach, it aims to uncover how teachers interpret and internalize their learning from such training, and how it affects their personal growth, professional relationships, and instructional practices. Through this exploration, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the human dimension of teacher development and provide insights that can guide the design of more responsive and meaningful professional development programs in the education sector.

2. Methodology

2.1 Design

This study employed a qualitative, descriptive phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of teachers who have participated in personality development training. Guided by Colaizzi's procedural framework, the approach facilitates a rigorous description of the essence of teachers' experiences as consciously lived and interpreted. Descriptive phenomenology was chosen to privilege participants' first-person narratives and to reveal how personality development training is experienced, internalized, and reflected in teachers' professional identities, classroom practices, and interpersonal relationships.

2.2 Participants

The study involved 10 teachers from public secondary schools who have completed at least one personality development training program within the last two academic years. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had direct experience with the phenomenon of interest. Maximum variation sampling was employed to capture diversity in gender, years of teaching experience (ranging from early-, mid- to late-career teachers), subject specialization, and school location (urban and rural). Initial contacts were made through school administrators and professional development coordinators; further participants were recruited via snowball referral. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached with the tenth participant, at which point additional interviews yielded no new substantive themes.

2.3 Data Collection

Primary data were collected between June and November 2024 through in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face and video conferencing. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Prior to each interview, participants were provided with an information sheet and signed a written informed consent form. Interviews opened with a broad prompt such as, "Please describe your experience of participating in personality development training and how it has affected you personally and professionally," followed by probes exploring perceived benefits, challenges, changes in teaching practice, interpersonal relationships, self-efficacy, and examples of application in the classroom. With permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. To enrich the dataset, participants were invited to submit short reflective journals or post-training artifacts (e.g., action plans, feedback forms), and, when possible, observations of participants' classroom practice or peer feedback summaries were consulted.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed following Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method. First, transcripts and reflective materials were read repeatedly for immersion and holistic understanding. Second, significant statements directly related to the experience of personality development training were extracted. Third, formulated meanings were derived from these statements to capture the researcher's interpretive understanding. Fourth, the meanings were clustered into thematic groups representing shared patterns across participants. Fifth, an exhaustive description of the phenomenon was composed. Sixth, the exhaustive description was condensed into the essential structure of teachers' experiences. Finally, member checking was conducted with a subset of participants to validate interpretations and refine themes. NVivo (or manual coding) was used to organize codes and support transparent theme development.

2.5 Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness was ensured through Lincoln and Guba's (1986) criteria. Credibility was achieved via prolonged engagement with participants, triangulation of data sources (interviews, reflective journals, and available artifacts), and member checking. Dependability and confirmability were supported by maintaining a comprehensive audit trail documenting raw data, coding decisions, theme development, and reflective memos. Peer debriefing with experienced qualitative researchers provided an external check on analytic decisions. Transferability was enhanced by providing a thick description of participants, the research context, the training interventions referenced, and rich verbatim excerpts so readers may assess applicability to similar educational settings.

3. Results

Ten teachers from public secondary schools participated in the study, ranging in age from 27 to 65 years. The group consisted of five female and five male teachers, all holding at least a bachelor's degree in education and having participated in at least one personality development training within the last two academic years. Their narratives revealed how such training shaped their personal growth, professional relationships, and teaching practices. From their accounts emerged seven major themes, each illustrating distinct but interconnected aspects of how personality development training impacts teachers' lives.

Theme 1: Rediscovering Self-Identity and Confidence

Teachers described the training as a transformative experience that allowed them to rediscover themselves, regain self-confidence, and reconnect with their sense of purpose as educators.

Reconnection with self-worth. Participants shared that the training helped them rebuild their self-esteem and recognize their personal and professional value.

P1: "I realized that I had forgotten my worth. The training reminded me that I am capable and valuable."

P5: "It rebuilt my confidence after years of self-doubt."

P8: "I learned to see myself beyond my mistakes and limitations."

Renewed sense of purpose. Teachers emphasized that reflecting on their motivations for teaching reignited their passion for the profession.

P3: "The sessions made me remember why I became a teacher in the first place."

P6: "It gave meaning to what I do every day."

P10: "The training rekindled my sense of purpose in serving students."

Positive self-image. Participants expressed that they began to view themselves more positively, leading to greater enthusiasm and optimism in work and life.

P2: "Now, I see myself as a confident and capable teacher."

P4: "It helped me build a better image of myself."

P7: "I learned to appreciate my strengths rather than focus on my flaws."

Theme 2: Strengthening Communication and Interpersonal Skills

The training enhanced teachers' ability to interact effectively, communicate confidently, and develop stronger relationships with colleagues and students.

Improved communication competence. Participants shared that the training boosted their verbal and non-verbal communication abilities.

P1: "I became more expressive and articulate in meetings."

P5: "I learned to communicate clearly without hesitation."

P9: "It made me more confident when speaking in front of others."

Enhanced collegial interaction. Teachers highlighted that collaboration and teamwork improved after the training.

P2: "We learned how to listen better to one another."

P6: "It strengthened our bond as a faculty."

P8: "I became more open to feedback and cooperation."

Positive classroom rapport. The training also improved teacher-student relationships through empathy and effective communication.

P3: "My students respond better when I communicate calmly and positively."

P4: "I became more approachable to my learners."

P7: "I can now connect with my students more easily."

Theme 3: Emotional Awareness and Regulation

Participants emphasized the importance of emotional management as one of the most impactful outcomes of the training.

Recognizing emotions. Teachers became more aware of their emotional triggers and reactions.

P2: "I learned to identify what stresses me and how to manage it."

P5: "The training helped me understand my emotions better."

P8: "Awareness of my feelings changed how I handle situations."

Managing emotional responses. They learned strategies to stay calm and composed even in stressful circumstances.

P1: "I don't react immediately anymore—I think first."

P4: "It taught me to control my temper and stay professional."

P10: "I learned to manage emotions and respond with empathy."

Developing emotional resilience. Participants reported greater emotional strength in handling both personal and professional challenges.

P3: "I've become more resilient to criticism and setbacks."

P6: "The training made me emotionally stronger."

P9: "I now face problems with a calm and positive mindset."

Theme 4: Renewed Motivation and Professional Passion

The training reignited teachers' enthusiasm for teaching, giving them renewed energy and commitment.

Rekindled enthusiasm. Teachers described feeling recharged and motivated to teach again.

P1: "After the training, I felt excited to go back to class."

P3: "It was like a fresh start for my career."

P7: "It renewed my passion for teaching."

Commitment to lifelong learning. Participants recognized the value of continuous self-improvement.

P2: "I realized that growth doesn't stop after college."

P5: "The training made me eager to attend more seminars."

P9: "Learning new things keeps me motivated."

Sense of accomplishment. Teachers felt more fulfilled and satisfied in their profession.

P4: "It gave me a sense of achievement to see my progress."

P6: "I felt proud of my professional growth."

P10: "I became more content and driven to excel."

Theme 5: Application of Learning in Teaching Practice

Participants shared that they actively applied what they learned from the training in their daily classroom interactions and pedagogical approaches.

Integrating personality development principles. Teachers embedded self-awareness and confidence-building strategies into their teaching methods.

P1: "I used some training techniques to motivate my students."

P5: "I encourage learners to believe in their abilities."

P8: "My lessons now include short reflections on growth and attitude."

Enhanced classroom management. The training improved their ability to handle students effectively and positively.

P2: "I became more patient and calm during classroom conflicts."

P6: "It helped me discipline students with compassion."

P9: "The classroom atmosphere is more positive now."

Improved student engagement. Teachers noticed that students responded better when they applied what they learned.

P3: "My students are more participative when I show confidence."

P4: "They mirror my positive attitude."

P10: "The energy in class has become more encouraging."

Theme 6: Building Stronger Professional and Social Relationships

The training nurtured relationships not only among colleagues but also with students and the school community.

Strengthened collegial bonds. Participants developed trust and camaraderie among peers.

P1: "It brought our faculty closer together."

P5: "We now support one another more."

P9: "It fostered unity among us."

Improved teacher–student connection. Teachers expressed that the training helped them understand students better.

P2: "I became more empathetic toward my students."

P4: "I try to listen to their struggles now."

P7: "They feel more comfortable approaching me."

Positive school culture. The collective impact of improved relationships strengthened school morale.

P3: "The school atmosphere became more positive."

P6: "Everyone seems more cooperative."

P8: *"It created a culture of respect and kindness."*

Theme 7: Recognizing the Need for Continuous Development

Teachers realized that personality development is an ongoing process requiring sustained effort and institutional support.

Awareness of continuous growth. Participants acknowledged that development should not stop after a single training.

P1: *"This is not a one-time thing—it's a lifelong journey."*

P5: *"We need regular follow-up sessions."*

P10: *"Growth should be continuous for all teachers."*

Desire for institutional support. Teachers emphasized the importance of school-driven initiatives.

P2: *"Our school should regularly offer similar programs."*

P6: *"Institutional support makes the learning sustainable."*

P8: *"Programs like this should be part of teacher development plans."*

Commitment to self-improvement. The experience encouraged teachers to continue personal growth beyond the training.

P3: *"I started reading books on personality growth."*

P4: *"I now set personal goals for self-improvement."*

P9: *"I am motivated to attend more professional training."*

4. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of teachers who participated in personality development training, highlighting how they internalized self-growth, strengthened confidence, enhanced emotional intelligence, and sustained empowerment in their personal and professional lives. The thematic analysis revealed seven key dimensions that reflect how such training shaped their identity, communication, emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, and overall resilience as educators.

The first theme, transformation of self-perception, revealed that teachers experienced a renewed understanding of themselves through heightened self-awareness and acceptance. Participants described the training as a transformative experience that allowed them to reconnect with their values, rediscover their purpose, and strengthen their self-worth. This aligns with Rogers' (1961) Humanistic Theory, which emphasizes self-actualization and the alignment of the real and ideal self. Teachers' reflective narratives showed that personal development encouraged authentic self-understanding, leading to more grounded and confident teaching identities. The process of rediscovering self-worth also mirrors Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, where the fulfillment of autonomy and competence fosters intrinsic motivation and personal fulfillment.

The second theme, enhanced confidence and communication, highlighted that the training empowered teachers to express themselves more effectively and assertively in both professional and social contexts. Participants indicated that personality development training helped them overcome self-doubt, strengthen public speaking, and improve classroom presence. These findings support Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, particularly the concept of self-efficacy, which posits that belief in one's abilities influences motivation and performance. As teachers gained mastery experiences through guided training activities, their confidence grew, allowing them to engage with colleagues, students, and administrators more effectively. This aligns with the work of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007), who emphasized that teachers' confidence significantly affects communication and instructional quality.

The third theme, emotional awareness and regulation, reflected how teachers learned to manage emotions constructively after the training. Participants shared that they became more aware of their emotional triggers, more patient with students, and more capable of maintaining composure in stressful situations. This finding aligns with Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence framework, emphasizing self-regulation, empathy, and motivation as key aspects of personal and professional success. By becoming emotionally intelligent educators, participants were better equipped to create calm, respectful, and empathetic classroom environments. In addition, this theme echoes the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), suggesting that emotional regulation protects teachers' psychological resources, preventing burnout and enhancing resilience.

The fourth theme, professional growth and classroom impact, revealed that the training directly influenced teachers' instructional practices and student engagement. Teachers reported that their improved self-presentation and interpersonal skills translated into more dynamic and interactive classrooms. These experiences resonate with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, which underscores how reflective learning transforms experience into practice. Participants actively integrated lessons from personality development sessions into classroom strategies, modeling confidence, empathy, and respect to inspire their students. This transformation highlights how personal growth serves as a foundation for pedagogical effectiveness, supporting the idea that teachers' self-improvement enhances their professional competence (Guskey, 2002).

The fifth theme, strengthened interpersonal relationships, showed that personality development training fostered stronger collegiality, empathy, and collaboration. Teachers shared that they became more patient, open, and understanding toward peers and students. This finding is supported by Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which suggests that positive relational exchanges promote trust and reciprocity in professional settings. Improved communication and interpersonal awareness allowed teachers to build harmonious relationships that enhanced school culture. Furthermore, this theme aligns with Vygotsky's (1978)

social constructivist perspective, highlighting the importance of social interaction in learning and professional development.

The sixth theme, resilience and adaptability, captured how teachers developed the psychological flexibility to handle stress, change, and uncertainty. Participants described that the training helped them cultivate optimism, perseverance, and a growth mindset, enabling them to navigate professional challenges more constructively. This aligns with Dweck's (2006) Growth Mindset Theory, which asserts that individuals who believe in their capacity to grow are more resilient in facing setbacks. Teachers' accounts also echo the findings of Luthans et al. (2007), who emphasized psychological capital—comprising hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism—as vital for sustaining well-being and professional performance in education.

The seventh theme, sustained personal and professional empowerment, demonstrated that the effects of the training extended beyond its immediate duration. Teachers described developing a sense of lifelong learning, fulfillment, and leadership potential. Many became more proactive in self-improvement, mentoring peers, and inspiring students by modeling confidence and integrity. This finding is grounded in Bass's (1985) Transformational Leadership Theory, which highlights how empowered individuals can influence and uplift others. The sustained empowerment of teachers underscores how personality development nurtures self-efficacy, purpose, and agency—key attributes of effective and fulfilled educators.

The findings of this study carry several implications for educational practice. Personality development training should be institutionalized as part of continuous professional development programs to enhance teachers' emotional intelligence, confidence, and resilience. Schools can implement reflective sessions, mentoring initiatives, and leadership workshops to sustain the personal growth gained from such programs. Beyond technical training, emphasis on self-awareness and interpersonal development can foster holistic teacher growth that positively impacts classroom dynamics and school culture.

This study has limitations. Its focus on a specific group of teachers may limit the generalizability of findings, and reliance on self-reported experiences may introduce subjectivity. Future research could examine the longitudinal effects of personality development training on teacher performance, explore comparative experiences across public and private institutions, or integrate quantitative measures of confidence, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence to complement qualitative insights.

5. Conclusion

The teachers in this study embodied a journey of personal transformation and professional renewal through their participation in personality development training. Their experiences reflect a conscious effort to grow beyond instructional competence toward holistic self-improvement. This transformation was not merely a superficial enhancement of demeanor or communication skills, but a deeper process of

rediscovering self-worth, building confidence, regulating emotions, and cultivating a resilient sense of professional identity. For these teachers, personality development served as a space for reflection, empowerment, and the reconstruction of self—a process that extended into their classrooms, relationships, and communities.

Despite the challenges of time constraints, emotional fatigue, and initial apprehension, teachers translated their learning into tangible changes in mindset, communication, and classroom engagement. Their narratives revealed that self-awareness, emotional balance, and interpersonal sensitivity became essential tools in navigating the complex demands of the teaching profession. Through such growth, they discovered that personal development is not separate from professional excellence but a vital foundation for it.

These findings suggest key implications for teacher development and educational policy. Schools and educational agencies, including the Department of Education (DepEd), should consider integrating personality development as a sustained component of teacher professional development programs. Structured workshops focusing on self-awareness, communication, and emotional intelligence, complemented by reflective mentoring and peer-support sessions, can help sustain the gains of such training. Moreover, institutional recognition of teachers' personal growth alongside instructional performance can foster a more holistic approach to professional advancement and well-being.

This study is among the first to explore the lived experiences of teachers engaging in personality development training as a catalyst for self and professional transformation. While context-specific to teachers in Philippine public schools, the underlying processes of self-renewal, confidence-building, and emotional resilience may resonate across various educational contexts. Future research may employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to examine the sustained impact of such training on teaching performance, stress management, and professional satisfaction. By centering the human dimension of teacher growth, this study affirms that nurturing the person behind the profession is essential in sustaining quality, motivation, and meaning in the teaching vocation.

Acknowledgment

Sincere appreciation is given to all peer reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions, which helped the author to improve the quality of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Author Contributions: Retherford, K.; Study design, method conception, data collection, data analysis and manuscript writing